



## Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

Steven L. Beshear, Governor

Leonard K. Peters, Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **New Head of Kentucky Office of Mine Safety and Licensing Named** *Will lead mine safety initiatives for Kentucky*

**FRANKFORT, Ky. – (March 1, 2012)** – Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet Secretary Len Peters today named Jerry F. “Freddie” Lewis, Sr., as the new executive director of the Office of Mine Safety and Licensing (OMSL). Lewis most recently was manager of Safety and Training for Alliance Coal Company. Prior to that position, he worked for more than nine years in the regional OMSL office in Pikeville as a mine safety analyst, mine inspector, mine safety rescue team member and classroom instructor.

“Mine safety is a top priority in this cabinet and I have every confidence that Freddie Lewis will help us focus on making sure our miners go to work each day with the knowledge that we value their health and welfare,” said Peters. “His background in mine safety will, I believe, ensure we accomplish that goal.”

The main responsibilities of OMSL and its 162 employees are to provide a safe working environment, effective education and training to coal miners that fosters safe working practices, and to ensure the laws and regulations governing coal mining are enforced fairly and consistently.

In 2011, OMSL put into place a program that used mine safety analysts to conduct on-site meetings as miners began their shifts, reminding them to be diligent in the workplace in an attempt to cut down on mining accidents. That is a practice Department for Natural Resources Commissioner Steve Hohmann said will continue.

“We can never back down from making sure our miners are safe,” said Hohmann. “One of the biggest challenges Freddie faces is the continued diligence of his agency in implementing the drug testing program to keep the mines drug free.”

Lewis replaces Johnny Greene who retired at the end of 2011.

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